GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4316
ANSWERED ON:28.03.2017
Use of Methyl Bromide
Dev Km. Sushmita

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is true that the developing nations had to freeze methyl bromide usage by 2002 at average 1995-98 levels, reduced by 20% by 2005, and complete phase out by 2015, if so, the details thereof;

(b) the extent to which the usage of methyl bromide for fumigation has been phased out since 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-2017 and progress thereafter;

(c) the details of the usage of methyl bromide for fumigation on pulses imported to India from other countries;

(d) the details of the suitable alternatives for the Indian quarantine system that is being used instead of methyl bromide; and

(e) whether there are any side effects of the alternatives used, if so the details thereof and the measures taken by the Government to combat the effects?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMERS WELFARE

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(a): Yes, Madam. Methyl Bromide is one of the ozone depleting substances. As per Article 5(1) of Montreal Protocol, Methyl bromide use in countries (developing countries) will be frozen in 2002 (based on average 1995-1998 consumption), reduced by 20% in 2005, and phased out in 2015. However, "Critical uses" of methyl bromide are yet to be fully defined under the Protocol. Many countries, both industrialized and developing, have committed to phase out methyl bromide well in advance of the Montreal Protocol schedule. Quarantine and Pre-Shipment (QPS) uses are currently exempt from controls under the Montreal Protocol. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal organization to monitor Methyl Bromide uses in India.

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(b): In India, uses of Methyl Bromide for soil fumigation, etc. is banned and is only used for quarantine and pre shipment phyto-sanitary treatment of agricultural commodities meant for export.

(c): On an average 4.5 to 5.0 Million ton of pulses are imported into India per year. In order to protect the Indian Agriculture from exotic insect/pests, imported pulses are to be fumigated with Methyl Bromide @ 32gm/cu.mt. for 24 hours in accordance with import conditions specified under Plant Quarantine Order, 2003 issued under Destructive Insect and Pests Act, 1914.

(d): The following alternative treatments are being used in Indian quarantine system as per the international standards and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

i) Hot Water Treatment (HWT) & Vapour Heat Treatment (VHT) -& Irradiation - for fresh fruits/vegetables
ii) Heat Treatment (HT)- for timber and wooden products
iii) Cold Treatment- Fresh Fruits & Vegetables
iv) Phosphine Fumigation- For Dry fruits (Almonds, walnut etc).

(e): Methyl Bromide is highly potent and requires 24 hours duration, whereas phosphine fumigation requires longer duration of minimum 7-15 days, which may affect the import/export trade. Lethal effect of methyl bromide is on wide range of pests including Nematodes, whereas phosphine will not be effective against nematodes and egg stages of insects.

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